N° 98. SATURDAY, *December* 16, 1786.

——Nec domus potentum
Nossemus, nec imagines superbas. MART.

To the AUTHOR of the LOUNGER.

SIR,

IT is a long time since my last correspondence with you; and indeed, I did not know that your Paper continued to come out, till lately that I saw it at a certain great house where I was on a visit. Of that visit, Mr. Lounger, if you will give me leave, I will tell you some particulars. Since I find that some of the great folks take in your paper, it may do them no harm to be told a little how things are about them; or if, as I am apt to believe, they are not easily to be mended, it will at least give us little folks some satisfaction to get out our thoughts of them.

Your predecessor, the Author of the *Mirror*, who was kind enough to take some interest in my family, was well acquainted with its connection with Lady ——, the great Lady who first

first set my wife and daughters heads agog about fashion and finery. In my last to you, I informed you of our having luckily lost her acquaintance, though I had got into another hobble by our intimacy with my rich neighbour young *Mushroom*. I am ashamed to tell you, Sir, how things have come about; but, as I told Mr. Mirror, I was always rather too easy in my way: I have been myself on a visit at the house of the great Lady! (I beg her Lord's pardon, but that's the way of speaking in our neighbourhood.) But this comes through Mr. Mushroom too. You must know, that since he came home, by presents of shawls and muslins to my Lady, and, as some folks say, by lending some of his spare rupees to my Lord, he is become a great favourite at —— Lodge. And so my Lord and Lady and he have laid their heads together, that Mr. Mushroom shall be member for our county the next vacancy; and they have been driving and riding about among us, and giving feasts and dances at —— Lodge and Mushroom Hall. I fought a little shy, as the saying is; but Mrs. and Miss Mushroom so tickled the ears of my wife and daughters, and my Lady talked so much of the happiness she had formerly enjoyed at my house, and of her regret for having lost the honour of my daughter Mrs. ——'s acquaintance, that they

they were silly enough to forgive all her former neglect of them; and then they so belaboured me with the great things that might be expected from my Lord's patronage, and Mr. Mushroom's attachment to my family (and they had some shauls and muslins too), that I at last agreed to give my vote as they wished. Oh! then, there was so much fuss and kindness, and such invitations to go to —— Lodge, and so many honours and pleasures—that, in short, Mr. Lounger, having got in my corn and sold my cattle, I was prevailed on to lay out a little of the money in a new suit, to get a new saddle and bridle for my mare, to trim my brown colt for a portmanteau-horse, and mounting John upon him, whom I could best spare at this season too, I accompanied one of my brother freeholders, a plain man like myself, who takes a little of his wife's advice, to —— Lodge.

As I knew something of the hours there, I took care that we should not reach the house till within a few minutes of four, though my neighbour was in a sort of flutter the last three miles, for fear of being too late. But when we got off our horses, and walked into the lobby, we found we were much too early for the house. We had stalked about for some minutes, without knowing where we should go, when, who should I see come in but my old acquaintance Mr.

Mr. *Papillot*, though it seems he had forgotten me; for when I asked him if my Lord or his Lady were within, he gave me a broad stare, and said that some of the servants would inform us. None of the servants, however, chose to be so kind; for though one or two peeped out of this and that door, they took no sort of concern in us, till at last a big surly-looking fellow appeared, pulling down the ruffles of his shirt, and bade us follow him into the saloon. Here we found an open window, and a half-kindled fire, and were left to cool our heels for above an hour, before any living creature appeared. At last, a civil enough sort of gentleman, whose name I never heard, for the family called him nothing but Captain, came in, and after talking a little to us about the weather, the roads, and the crop (though he seemed to have but a bad notion of farming), left the room again, telling us that my Lord and Lady would soon be down; but that dinner was somewhat later that day than usual, as they and their company had been at a bear-baiting, my Lord's bear having been backed against his neighbour Sir Harry Driver's dogs. This accident kept us from our dinner till six o'clock, by which time my neighbour and I, who had breakfasted betimes, were almost famished. Meanwhile we were left to entertain ourselves with the pictures, not

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to mention my Lady's French lap-dog, which a ſervant brought in (I ſuppoſe by the time he had been dreſſed for dinner) and laid on a cuſhion at the fire-ſide. I found indeed one of the late numbers of the *Lounger*, which I began to read; but my neighbour *Broadcaſt* yawned ſo on the firſt page, that I laid it by out of complaiſance to him. Soon after the lap-dog, ſome of her Ladyſhip's company came in one after another, and did us the honour of ſtaring at us, and ſpeaking to the lap-dog. The dinner-bell was rung before my Lady appeared, who, to do her juſtice, behaved politely enough, and began to aſk half a dozen queſtions about our wives and children, to which ſhe did not wait for an anſwer; but to ſay truth, ſhe had her hands full of the bear-baiting company, who, when they were all aſſembled, made a very numerous party. My Lord entered a few minutes after her; he did not give himſelf much trouble about any of us, till on the Captain's whiſpering ſomething in his ear, he came up to where my neighbour and I ſtood, and ſaid he was very happy to have the honour of ſeeing us at —— Lodge.

When we went to dinner, we contrived to place ourſelves on each ſide of our good friend the Captain, and things went on pretty well. I knew that at ſuch a table the victuals were not

not always what they ſeemed; and therefore I was cautious of aſking for any of your figured diſhes. At laſt, however, I got helped to a mutton-chop, as I would have called it; but the Captain told me it was a ragout. When I taſted it, it was ſo Frenchified, and ſmelt ſo of garlic, which I happen to have an averſion to, that I was glad to get rid of it as ſoon (and that was not very ſoon) as I could prevail on a ſervant to take away my plate. The Captain, who gueſſed my taſte I ſuppoſe, very kindly informed me, there was roaſt beef on the ſide-board, and ſent a requeſt to a fine gentleman out of livery, who had the carving of it, for a ſlice to me. But whether he thought I looked like a cannibal, or that the diſh, being little in requeſt, was neglected in the roaſting, he ſent me a monſtrous thick cut, ſo red and raw, that I could not touch a morſel of it; ſo I was obliged to confine my dinner to the leg and wing of a partridge, which the ſecond courſe afforded me. I did not obſerve how my friend Broadcaſt fared at dinner; but I ſaw he catched a Tartar at the deſert; for happening to take a mouthful of a peach, as he thought it, what ſhould it be but a lump of ice, that ſtung his hollow tooth to the quick, and brought the tears over his cheeks. The wine after dinner might have conſoled us for all

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theſe little misfortunes, if we had had time to partake of it; but there the French mode came acroſs us again, and we had drank but a few glaſſes, and had not got half through the hiſtory of the bear-baiting, when coffee was brought.

When we went into the drawing-room, we found the card-tables ſet, and my Lady engaged with a party at Whiſt. She recommended ſome of us to the care of a friend of hers, a Lady ſomewhat advanced in life, though ſhe was ſtill a maiden one, for they called her *Miſs Lurcher*, who made up a table at Farthing-Loo. As this was a game I was uſed to play at home, and the ſtake was ſo very trifling, I conſented to make one. My neighbour Broadcaſt refuſed, and ſat down at the other end of the room, to hear one of the young Ladies play on the Harpſichord, where he affronted himſelf by falling aſleep. It had been as well for ſome other people that they had been aſleep too. This game, though it began with farthings, ſoon mounted up to a very conſiderable ſum, and I had once loſt to the amount of Twenty Pounds. A lucky reverſe of fortune brought me a little up again, and I went to ſupper only 5000 farthings, that is five guineas, out of pocket. It would not become me to ſuſpect any foul play at —— Lodge; but I could not help obſerving, that Miſs Lurcher held *Pam* plaguily often. I have been told ſince,

ſince, that ſhe has little other fortune than what ſhe makes by her good luck at cards : and yet ſhe was as finely dreſſed as my Lady, and had as fine a plume of feathers on her hat : I ſhall never look on that hat again without thinking that I ſee *Pam* in the front of it.

When we were ſhewn to our rooms, I looked for the attendance of John, to whom I had given ſtrict charge to be watchful in that matter; but he was not to be found, and, I was told, had never appeared at the Lodge after he went with his horſes to the inn. Before going to bed, I ſtole into the chamber where my friend Broadcaſt lay, and agreed with him, who ſeemed as willing to be gone as myſelf, that we ſhould cut ſhort our viſit, and (ſince French was the word) take a French leave early next morning. We were both up by day-light, and groped our way down ſtairs to get our hats and whips, that we might make our eſcape to where John and the horſes were lodged. But we could not find our road to the lobby, by which we had entered. There did not ſeem to be a creature ſtirring in the houſe; and, after wandering through ſeveral empty halls, in one of which we found a Backgammon table open, with a decanter not quite empty, on which was a Claret label, we went down a few ſteps to another paſſage, where we imagined we heard

ſomebody ſtirring. But we had not gone many ſteps when the rattle of a chain made us take to our heels; and it was well we did; for we were within half a yard of being ſaluted by my Lord's bear, whoſe quarter it ſeems we had ſtrayed into. The noiſe of our flight, and his purſuit, brought a chambermaid, who happened to be up, to our aſſiſtance, and by her means we had the good fortune to get ſafely through the lobby into the lawn, from whence we had only a mile or two's walk to the inn where John was put up.

For want of John's attendance, I had comforted myſelf with the reflection, that if he had not been employed in taking care of me, the horſes would fare the better for it. But when we reached the houſe, we found that John had been employed in nothing but taking care of himſelf. The ſervants of my Lord's other gueſts, who were there, kept a very good houſe, as the landlord called it; and John had been a good deal jollier at dinner the day before than his maſter. It was with ſome difficulty we got him on his legs, and brought him along with us. It was a long time before my portmanteau could be found; and my new bridle, with a plated bit, had been exchanged by ſome clearer-headed fellow, for an old ſnaffle not worth a groat.

Such,

Such, Sir, is the hiſtory of my firſt viſit, and I hope my laſt, to —— Lodge. But as I have found the experience even of one viſit a little expenſive, I think it is doing a kindneſs to people in my ſituation, to let them know what they have to expect there. When my Lord aſks a vote again, let it be conditioned on the part of the freeholder, that he ſhan't be obliged to ſtudy the pictures of his ſaloon above half an hour, that he ſhall have ſomething to eat and ſomething to drink at dinner, and be inſured from falling into the paws of the bear, or the hands of Miſs Lurcher.

I am, &c.

JOHN HOMESPUN.

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